LISTING OF CLAIMS

Please add claim 51 and amend claim 44 as indicated below, all without prejudice.

1-43.(Cancelled)

44.(Currently Amended) A method of operating a memory system including a controller and a non-volatile memory, the non-volatile memory having a plurality of multi-cell units of erase, the method comprising:

establishing by the controller of an initial set of metablock linkings by which the controller accesses the non-volatile memory, each metablock linking comprised of a composite logical linking of a plurality of units of erase and where the controller forms said initial set of metablock linkings according to a rule;

maintaining a record of the metablock linkings in non-volatile memory, wherein said record only includes deviations from the rule;

subsequently determining that one or more units of erase in a first metablock linking of the initial set of metablock linkings is defective;

updating the first metablock linking so that it deviates from the rule and no longer contains the defective one or more units unit of erase; and

storing a record of the subsequently updating the record of the first linking in the non-volatile memory to reflect the updating of the first metablock linking , wherein the said record only includes deviations from the rule.

45.(Previously Presented) The method of claim 44, wherein updating the first metablock linking includes replacing the one or more defective units of erase with non-defective units of erase.

46.(Previously Presented) The method of claim 45, wherein said non-defective units of erase are selected from a list of unlinked units of erase.

47.(Previously Presented) The method of claim 46, wherein said list of unlinked units of erase is maintained in the non-volatile memory.

48.(Previously Presented) The method of claim 47, further comprising:

subsequent to said replacing the defective unit of erase with non-defective units of erase, updating said list of unlinked units of erase.

49.(Previously Presented) The method of claim 45, wherein said non-defective units of erase is selected from a unit of erase formerly belonging to another linking.

50.(Previously Presented) The method of claim 44, wherein said rule is implemented by firmware on the memory system.

51.(New) The method of claim 44, further comprising:

determining that one or more units of erase of the updated linking of the first metablock is defective;

further updating the first metablock linking so that it no longer contains the defective one or more units of erase of the previously updated first metablock linking; and

subsequently further updating the record of the first linking in the non-volatile memory to reflect the further updating of the first metablock linking.